



City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections

Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN
REVIEW

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3025891

Address: 7118 Beacon Ave. S.

Applicant: Julian Weber, JWA Architects

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, February 28, 2016

Board Members Present: Carey Dagliano-Holmes (Chair)
Sharon Khosla
Charles Romero
David Sauvion

Board Members Absent: Julian Weber

SDCI Staff Present: David L. Landry, AICP, Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial 1
(NC1-30)

Nearby Zones: North SF 5000
South SF 5000
East SF 5000
West SF 5000

Project Area: 41,986 square feet (sq. ft.)

Overlay Districts: None

Environmentally Critical Areas: None



Current Development:

The proposal site is located on the east side of Beacon Avenue S., just south of S. Myrtle St. The site is currently occupied by a single story mini strip mall built in 1957, which currently includes a grocery store and other commercial uses.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The proposal site is located within the Rainier Valley neighborhood district. The Rainier Valley neighborhood district is located east of Beacon Hill; west of Mount Baker, and Seward Park, south of the Central District and First Hill, and north of Rainier Beach. The proposal site is sandwiched between institutional uses; Van Asselt Elementary School to the west, Seattle Police Department South Precinct to the east and Van Asselt Playground and Community Center to north of the Police station. Other uses in the immediate area include an auto service shop located at the corner of Beacon Ave S. and S. Myrtle and the East African Community Services located to the east of the Community Center and Playground. Other land uses located to the northwest, south west and southeast have a strong residential character with tree line street made up of one and two-story single family residences.

Access:

Access to the site is currently from the east off of Beacon Avenue to the grocery store and other outlets south of Myrtle though the auto service parking site at the corner of Beacon and S. Myrtle, along a driveway/alley along the rear or east side of the strip mall building.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is to construct 30 townhouse units and 10 live-work units on the east side of Beacon Ave. S., just south of S. Myrtle St. Parking for 40 vehicles will be provided on-site at grade.

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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3025891) at the following website:

<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/news/events/DesignReview/SearchPastReviews/default.aspx>

The packet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at SDCl:

Mailing Address: **Public Resource Center**
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments at the EDG public meeting and two written comments were received one on the day of the public meeting and one after.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

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1. Massing:

- a. The Board was supportive of the general design concept of creating a well-designed dense residential townhouse project with shared open spaces. The Board commended the design team's goal of providing three bedroom family oriented units, as very few projects have provided this option in the past. The Board was also supportive of the team's goal of providing live-work units along Beacon Avenue but were concerned about the viability of live-work units along Beacon Ave. **(CS3-A-4)**
- b. Board members felt that Option 1 had the strongest sense of commercial design with its two-story mass and awning used for the façade of the live –work spaces which reference some of the massing and scale of other commercial uses located to the north. **(PL3-A, PL3-C)**
- c. The Board noted that part of being an urban site is the ability to have differences in character and different massing. For this reason, overall, the Board felt that the three options presented at the EDG were not successful in meeting the aforementioned goals as they did not reflect the diverse cultural nature of Beacon Hill neighborhood, they were too similar in terms of overall design concept, the layout is too dense and there is not enough open and amenity spaced designed to foster as sense of community engagement. As such, the Board asked the design team to develop a program with more of the following attributes: **(PL1-B-2, DC2-B-1, DC2-C-1)**
 - 1) Introduce design elements and programming that will aid in creating a stronger sense of cultural and community identity. **(CS3-B, DC2-C-1)**
Reduce the building mass in order to make room for additional amenity space. **(CS1-B-2, CS3-A-4, CS3-B)**
 - 2) Redesign the corner southern corner of the site where the townhouses are located to accommodate commercial uses on the bottom floors with amenity uses on the upper floors. **(DC2-C-2, DC2-E-1)**
 - 3) Provide more of a distinct architectural expression between commercial and residential. **(CS3-B, DC2-B-B1)**

2. **Access to Light and Air:** The Board described the three options presented at EDG as being too dark and narrow and were concerned that the site's open spaces would not have

access to light and air due to the very dense nature of the project. The Board felt that there was not enough of a balance between built structures and open space and more opportunities for the creation of more amenity and open spaces are needed. Board members also noted that the shadow studies depicted on pages 40 -42, in the EDG packet dated February 28, 2017 further demonstrated that the project including the pathways would be in shade or shadow most of the year. Finally because of the orientation and repetitive layout and design of the majority of the buildings, many homes would be in shade and not be able to take advantage of any solar gains. The Board recommended the following **(CS1-B-1, CS1-B-2)**:

- a. Break up the repetitive building forms with greater variety. **(CS3-A-4, DC2-B-1, DC2-C-1)**
- b. Combine some units to create larger amenity spaces. **(PL1-A-1, PL1-A-2, PL1-B-3, DC2-E-1)**
- c. Change the orientation of buildings to create better transitioning. **(PL3-B, DC2-E-1)**
- d. Explore creating a larger center corridor that could be used for more outdoor or amenity spaces. **(PL1-B-1, DC3-B-4)**

3. **Sense of Identity and Community:** The Board felt strongly that there was a lack of project identity or a recognizable entry off of Beacon Avenue and wanted to see more than just two driveways marking the entryway into the project site.

- a. Board members were concerned that the project in its current design does not reflect the racially diverse nature of the Beacon Hill neighborhood and suggested that there need to be strong reference to that cultural diversity in the architectural character of the buildings. **(PL3-A-1, PL1-B-3, CS3-B, DC2-C-3)**
- b. Board members also suggested that the street oriented units needed to be more than just identical building facades repeated along the Beacon Avenue street frontage. Members suggested that the repetitive pattern could be broken up with the introduction of townhouse forms or outdoor spaces at the edges of the development which could aid in creating a more unique recognizable transition into and within the project site. **(CS3-A, CS3-B-1, PL3-A, PL3-B, PL3-C)**
- c. The Board felt strongly that the townhouse structure located on the south side of the development is an opportunity for creating a project identity or community amenity. **(PL3-A-1, PL1-B-3)**
- d. Board members were concerned that the current program requires more open space to adequately support the project's stated goal of creating family oriented housing and a sense of community. **(PL1-A-1, PL1-A-2, PL1-B-2, DC3-B-4)**
- e. Create more architectural variety and a stronger sense of identity. **(CS3-A-4, DC2-B-1, DC2-C-1, DC2-E-1)**

4. **Live-Work:** The Board was concerned by the lack of a strong commercial edge along Beacon Ave., and the strong possibility that the live-work units along the street might not be viable. Board members asked the design team for precedents of successful live-work units that might inform the design of the live-work units being proposed. The Board felt that if the goal is to provide commercial use along Beacon Ave, then the current design approach does not work. Some Board members also felt that the live-work units would

actually take away commercial activity along Beacon Ave., which normally thrives as a result of vibrant commercial activity along this main thoroughfare. Finally the Board questioned how the façades of live-work units were developed as they do not match the north-south orientation of the other living units nor the diagonal angle of Beacon Ave. Therefore, the Board agreed that the diagonal facades really did not work and gave the following direction or suggestions **(PL3-B, DC2-E-1)**:

- a. Introduce building design elements that would create a stronger sense of commercial use along Beacon Ave. **(CS3-A-4, PL3-C, DC2-E-1)**
- b. Possibly combine or rotate live-work units. **(CS3-A-4, PL3-C, DC2-B-1)**

5. **Site Layout:** The Board felt that designing units to their maximum depth of 30 feet along Beacon Ave. has resulted in a 'monotonous landscape' with very little character or opportunity for home owners to establish any individual identity of their own. The Board also felt that there was not a sufficient balance between open space and built environment due to a lack of open space denseness of building units. Board members verbalized that by introducing as many units as possible on the site it will actually take away from a sense of community engagement. Board members were concerned that the placement of many of the bedrooms, configured in a face-to-face orientation, with units placed only 15 feet apart would lack privacy and suggests that window blinds would stay closed which is not conducive to community engagement. The Board felt that the project was forcing people into close quarters without proper amenity spaces. The Board gave the following direction **(CS1, CS3-A-2, CS3-A-3, CS3-A-4, PL1-A-1, PL1-A-2, PL1-B-1, PL1-B-2, PL1-B-3)**:

- a. Introduce elements that promote cultural diversity which is indicative of the identity of Beacon Hill. **(DC3-B-4, PL2-C-2)**
- b. Introduce elements that will foster a stronger sense of community. **(PL1-B-2, PL2-C-2)**
- c. Create better transitioning to the adjacent neighborhoods. **(PL3-B, DC2-C-3)**

6. **Vehicular Access:** The Board was concerned that such a large amount of open space was dedicated to automobile use. Members envisioned automobiles backing into each other in an area dedicated to community activity and engagement which is potentially dangerous. Members stated that they felt that the amenity areas were primarily designed for circulation with benches located at the each corners for community use only. The Board felt that Option 2 had the central access which allowed for larger spaces however the Board directed the Design team to **(PL2-C-1, DC1-B-1)**:

- a. Create more viable open space for users and residence. **PL1-B-2, DC3-B-4**
- b. Create a stronger sense of identity at the primary entryway. **(CS3-A-4, DC2-E-1)**
- c. Create a centralized amenity area instead of at the corners of the development. **(PL1-A-1, PL1-B-3, PL1-B-3)**

7. **Roof Forms:** The Board felt that while the gabled roofs were a positive design feature, they lacked variety and a strong sense of identity. Members also thought maximizing building heights made the development feel oppressive and wanted to see better arrangements and greater variety. **(CS3-A-4, DC2-C-1)**

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the following departures were requested.

- 1. Required Parking - Townhouse units (SMC 23.54.015 B1. d.)** The Code requires that for an individual garage serving a townhouse unit, the minimum required size of a parking space shall be for a large car, as described in subsection 23.54.030.A; which is 8.5 ft. x 19 ft.

The applicant is requesting a departure from this requirement for Schemes 2 and 3 to allow for a medium parking space of 8 ft. x 16 ft. The applicant believes that the granting of the departure will allow for the widening the central pedestrian pathway from 11' to 15' which would then result in a reduction in the proposed north and south driveway aisle be reduced from 24 ft. to 22 ft.

Some Boards members suggested that they currently did not support the departure based on the fact that three bedroom units are proposed, thus larger family vehicles are expected and the rationale doesn't support the reduction in parking stall size. The Board therefore could not state support for the departure request especially as they wanted to see how the master programming evolves based on their guidance at the next EDG meeting.

- 2. Setback Requirements - (SMC 23.47A.014B.3a):** The Code requires that for a structure containing a residential use, a setback is required for 15 feet for portions of structures above 13 feet in height to a maximum of 40 feet along any side or rear lot line that abuts a lot in a residential zone.

The applicant is requesting a departure for Schemes 2 and 3 from the required 15' setback for building portions above 13 feet to a reduced 3 foot continuous vertical setback for the entire length of the eastern property line which is immediately adjacent to the City of Seattle Police Department South Precinct building with a liberal 50 setback from the project proposal's eastern property line. The reduced setback would evidently allow for 2 and 3 unit residential buildings to be built along the south side of the central walkway instead of 1 six unit building. It is suggested that the separation between the two buildings would allow for a larger central gathering area with a width of 18 feet.

The Board wondered why it would be necessary to set back the building when it would be located next the police precinct buildings which includes more than 50 foot setback and dense foliage along the eastern property line. The Board in general felt that the rationale for the departure does not improve the project. The Board did not express support of this departure as they wanted to see how the project further evolves at the next EDG meeting.

- 3. Street-Level Development Standards - (SMC 23.47A.008.B.3):** The Code requires that non-residential uses shall extend an average depth of at least 30 feet and a minimum depth of 15 feet from the street-level street-facing facade.

The applicant is requesting to allow live/work units 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 to have an average depth of 27'. Current live-work units are based on a design which relies on a chamfered footprint which the design teams believes will allows live/work unit 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 to be oriented perpendicular to Beacon Ave., thus preventing conflict with the walkway and driveway with the adjacent residential structures.

The Board gave general support of the departure request but wanted to make sure that the commercial spaces read as commercial in response to the guidance provided above.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority guidelines identified by the Board as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

CONTEXT & SITE

CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.

CS1-B. SUNLIGHT AND NATURAL VENTILATION

CS1-B-1. Sun and Wind: Take advantage of solar exposure and natural ventilation available onsite where possible. Use local wind patterns and solar gain as a means of reducing the need for mechanical ventilation and heating where possible.

CS1-B-2. Daylight and Shading: Maximize daylight for interior and exterior spaces and minimize shading on adjacent sites through the placement and/or design of structures on the site.

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

CS3-A. EMPHASIZING POSITIVE NEIGHBORHOOD ATTRIBUTES

CS3-A-1. Fitting Old and New Together: Create compatibility between new projects, and existing architectural context, including historic and modern designs, through building articulation, scale and proportion, roof forms, detailing, fenestration, and/or the use of complementary materials.

CS3-A-2. Contemporary Design: Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.

CS3-A-3. Established Neighborhoods: In existing neighborhoods with a well-defined architectural character, site and design new structures to complement or be compatible with the architectural style and siting patterns of neighborhood buildings.

CS3-A-4. Evolving Neighborhoods: Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.

CS3-B. LOCAL HISTORY AND CULTURE

CS3-B-1. Placemaking: Explore the history of the site and neighborhood as a potential placemaking opportunity. Look for historical and cultural significance, using neighborhood groups and archives as resources.

PUBLIC LIFE

PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.
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PL1-A. NETWORK OF OPEN SPACES

PL1-A-1. Enhancing Open Space: Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces throughout the neighborhood. Consider ways that design can enhance the features and activities of existing off-site open spaces. Open space may include sidewalks, streets and alleys, circulation routes and other open areas of all kinds

PL1-A-2. Adding to Public Life: Seek opportunities to foster human interaction through an increase in the size and/or quality of project-related open space available for public life. Consider features such as widened sidewalks, recessed entries, curb bulbs, courtyards, plazas, or through-block connections, along with place-making elements such as trees, landscape, art, or other amenities, in addition to the pedestrian amenities listed in PL1.B3.

PL1-B. WALKWAYS AND CONNECTIONS

PL1-B-1. Pedestrian Infrastructure: Connect on-site pedestrian walkways with existing public and private pedestrian infrastructure, thereby supporting pedestrian connections within and outside the project.

PL1-B-2. Pedestrian Volumes: Provide ample space for pedestrian flow and circulation, particularly in areas where there is already heavy pedestrian traffic or where the project is expected to add or attract pedestrians to the area.

PL1-B-3. Pedestrian Amenities: Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open spaces to enliven the area and attract interest and interaction with the site and building should be considered. Visible access to the building's entry should be provided. Examples of pedestrian amenities include seating, other street furniture, lighting, year-round landscaping, seasonal plantings, pedestrian scale signage, site furniture, art work, awnings, large storefront windows, and engaging retail displays and/or kiosks.

PL1-C. OUTDOOR USES AND ACTIVITIES

PL2-C-1. Selecting Activity Areas: Concentrate activity areas in places with sunny exposure, views across spaces, and in direct line with pedestrian routes.

PL2-C-2. Informal Community Uses: In addition to places for walking and sitting, consider including space for informal community use such as performances, farmer's markets, kiosks and community bulletin boards, cafes, or street vending.

PL2-C-3. Year-Round Activity: Where possible, include features in open spaces for activities beyond daylight hours and throughout the seasons of the year, especially in neighborhood centers where active open space will contribute vibrancy, economic health, and public safety. These may include:

- a. seasonal plantings or displays and/or water features;
- b. outdoor heaters;
- c. overhead weather protection;
- d. ample, moveable seating and tables and opportunities for outdoor dining;
- e. an extra level of pedestrian lighting;
- f. trees for moderate weather protection and shade; and/or
- g. 24-hour wi-fi service.

PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

PL3-A. ENTRIES

PL3-A-1. Design Objectives: Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street. Scale and detail them to function well for their anticipated use and also to fit with the building of which they are a part, differentiating residential and commercial entries with design features and amenities specific to each.

- d. Individual entries to ground-related housing should be scaled and detailed appropriately to provide for a more intimate type of entry. The design should contribute to a sense of identity, opportunity for personalization, offer privacy, and emphasize personal safety and security for building occupants.

PL3-B RESIDENTIAL EDGES

PL3-B-1. Porous Edge: Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

PL3-B-3. Ancillary Activities: Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

PL3-C RETAIL EDGES

PL3-C-1. Porous Edge: Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

PL3-C-2. Visibility: Maximize visibility into the building interior and merchandise displays. Consider fully operational glazed wall-sized doors that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for displays.

PL3-C-3. Ancillary Activities: Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

DC1-B. VEHICULAR ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

DC1-B-1 Access Location and Design: Choose locations for vehicular access, service uses, and delivery areas that minimize conflict between vehicles and non-motorists wherever possible. Emphasize use of the sidewalk for pedestrians, and create safe and attractive conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers by:

- a. using existing alleys for access or, where alley access is not feasible, choosing a location for street access that is the least visually dominant and/or which offers opportunity for shared driveway use;
- b. where driveways and curb cuts are unavoidable, minimize the number and width as much as possible; and/or
- c. employing a multi-sensory approach to areas of potential vehicle pedestrian conflict such as garage exits/entrances. Design features may include contrasting or textured pavement, warning lights and sounds, and similar safety devices.

DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

DC2-B. ARCHITECTURAL AND FAÇADE COMPOSITION

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: Design all building facades including alleys and visible roofs considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades are attractive and well-proportioned through the placement and detailing of all elements, including bays, fenestration, and materials, and any patterns created by their arrangement. On sites that abut an alley, design the alley façade and its connection to the street carefully. At a minimum, consider wrapping the treatment of the street-facing façade around the alley corner of the building.

DC2-C. SECONDARY ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest: Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas). Detailing may include features such as distinctive door and window hardware, projecting window sills, ornamental tile or metal, and other high-quality surface materials and finishes.

DC2-C-2. Dual Purpose Elements: Consider architectural features that can be dual purpose—adding depth, texture, and scale as well as serving other project functions. Examples include shading devices and windows that add rhythm and depth as well as contribute toward energy efficiency and/or savings or canopies that provide street-level scale and detail while also offering weather protection. Where these elements are prominent design features, the quality of the materials is critical.

DC2-C-3. Fit With Neighboring Buildings: Use design elements to achieve a successful fit between a building and its neighbors, such as:

- a. considering aspects of neighboring buildings through architectural style, roof line, datum line detailing, fenestration, color or materials,
- b. using trees and landscaping to enhance the building design and fit with the surrounding context, and/or
- c. creating a well-proportioned base, middle and top to the building in locations where this might be appropriate. Consider how surrounding buildings have addressed base, middle, and top, and whether those solutions or similar ones might be a good fit for the project and its context.

DC2-E. FORM AND FUNCTION

DC2-E-1. Legibility and Flexibility: Strive for a balance between building legibility and flexibility. Design buildings such that their primary functions and uses can be readily determined from the exterior, making the building easy to access and understand. At the same time, design flexibility into the building so that it may remain useful over time even as specific programmatic needs evolve.

DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the design of the building so that each complements the other.

DC3-B. OPEN SPACE USES AND ACTIVITIES

DC3-B-4. Multifamily Open Space: Design common and private open spaces in multifamily projects for use by all residents to encourage physical activity and social interaction. Some examples include areas for gardening, children's play (covered and uncovered), barbeques, resident meetings, and crafts or hobbies.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended the applicant team return for a second Early Design Guidance meeting.